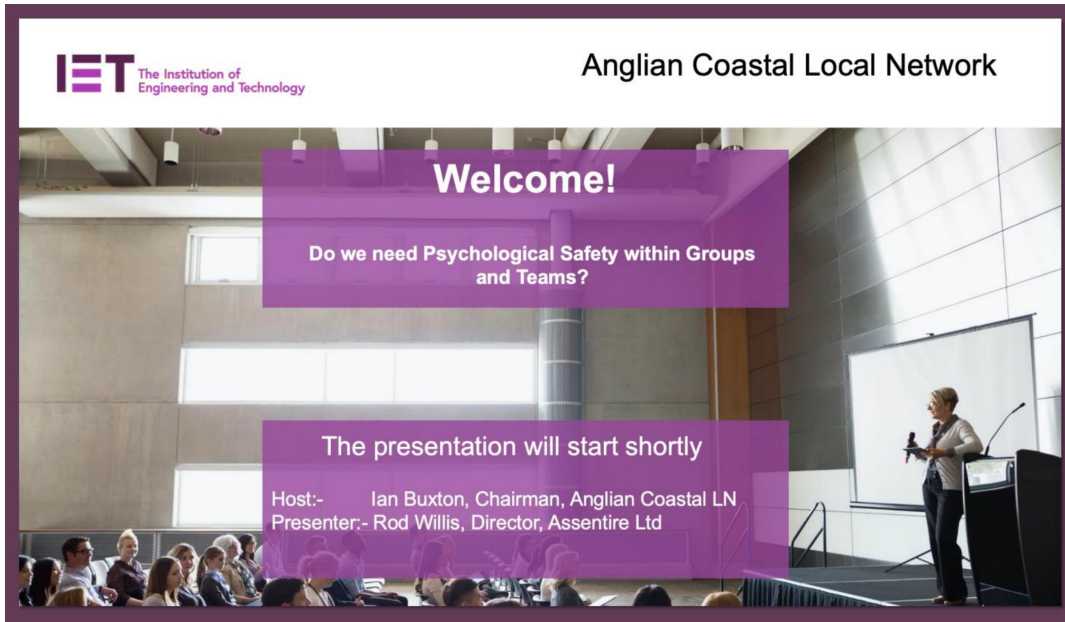


# Anglian Coastal Local Network Webinar held on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 2020 Question and Answer follow-up.



The slide deck can be viewed at this URL: <https://bit.ly/38bOTwy>

All questions in this document were submitted during the Webinar and have been anonymised. In total 25 questions were asked from a total of 118 participants. During the Q&A session 28% of the questions were answered directly. Some questions were answered during the session, however for completeness, all 25 questions are shared below. The questions have been grouped into general themes and paraphrased in some instances to aid the **assimilation** process. The word **assimilation** has been used above very deliberately; however, it may not be familiar to all readers. If you are curious about what this means in a psychological context, read of this 6-min post <https://bit.ly/3eGcAje>

This document is verbose and deliberately so. There are so many blind spots that are being highlighted by the presentation and the participants questions, and I wanted to offer a synopsis of a 10-year journey and more than 1K books. If you find some of the answers a little too heavy, just move to the next question, then return later on once some of the new ideas have been successfully assimilated by you.

This first question theme is answered by sharing details from a case study. This greater level of detail is shared for this first theme as this was the main focus of the talk. All other questions have been addressed in a summarised format.

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## Theme: Psychological Safety

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Q: How do you maintain psychological safety when dealing with poor performance, where you have to hold an individual to account?

Q: If you find yourself working in or with a Team which has no, or limited, psychological safety, how might you address this? Or do you just need to cope with it or leave?

Q: What are the most effective ways of increasing psychological safety in organisations or groups that have low levels of it?

Q: How do you maintain psychological safety when dealing with individual poor performance?

Q: Does the level of psychological safety varies depending on the industry? Is it different for Education, Engineering Health?

A: Answers to several elements of the above questions are found in this 12-min video.

**Building a psychologically safe workplace, by Amy Edmondson.** <https://youtu.be/LhoLuui9gX8>

Rather than repeat what is already in Amy Edmondson's video, I will assume those interested in this theme will have already watched the video and then read these reflections. The following come from my own direct experience working with and within other organisations. This hopefully will create what feels like a balance between what is often perceived as very theoretical. As Kurt Lewin once said, *'There is nothing more practical than a good theory'*. Theory and Practice are intertwined; however, our societal norms often mean we don't see this.

As you think about when you feel safe, be this physically or psychologically, note it is a feeling first and foremost. You may have objective evidence to support your feeling, but also you may not, yet you still have the feeling. Have you ever noticed that we have the ability to 'sense' the 'mood', as we enter a meeting?

I remember going into a technical review meeting with two organisations represented. The 'mood' was very sombre, with a little bit of hostility in the air. This was a critical review meeting after almost 24 months of ongoing technical issues. The relationship between the two organisations was at breaking point. You could feel that most of the people in the room were either waiting to get into a 'fight' (through words), or wished they were somewhere else. It seems the two main tactics that were likely to play out that day were, 'I better keep my head down' or 'attack is the best form of defence'.

This was a real-life situation and I suspect several people have experienced something similar. If you haven't, and you are in the earlier stages of your career, it will almost certainly be something you face one day.

This story incorporates the sentiment of the first four questions asked by those on the webinar. i.e. how do you balance the challenge of performance (individual or group) while creating a Psychologically Safe space, especially when there are conflicting interests and or tensions in play, while avoiding getting pulled into the drama of it all.

It was clear, a 'safe space' needed to be created. Why? If we didn't the two tactics already mentioned would have played out the same way they already had, for the past 24 months. At the time, my understanding that there was a need to create a 'safe space', was purely instinctual. The rationale behind this is quite simple, if two groups have spent 24-months not sorting something out, and both groups were competent engineering groups. The logic would say, the place people had not paid attention to (especially in engineering mindsets) was in fact the relationship space. The space between the groups and group members. FYI, this is known as the Group Dynamic. These are the steps that I took to bring this crisis back into control and provide a viable way forward for both organisations.

1: Build the foundations for Psychological Safety using an objective, rational process.

Understand the situation by empathising with all those in the meeting. The objective was to enable an accurate definition of what the problems actually were. It was amazing to see two engineering groups had lost their ability to clearly communicate, because of all the 'bad feelings'. What a paradox, engineers often pride themselves on being objective and rational. Yet it was emotional hijacking that was stopping meaningful engineering dialogue.

The outcome of this step was to create the foundations for Psychological Safety, by developing trust and confidence in an objective and rational co-created process that was to be followed by all (no exceptions by agreement).

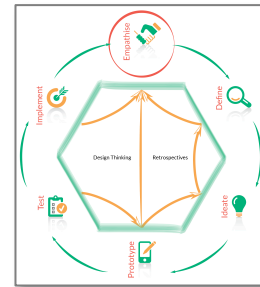
## 2: Creating the sense of Psychological Safety using day to day experience.

We used the agreed process, not allowing deviation without co-agreement and formal sign-off by both groups, as this established a sense of 'control'. This is NOT control of one group over another, it is about the process itself, i.e. the agreed process feels like it is in control. Given the process was co-created, this offers both groups to ability to experience what it is like working together, rather than against each other. As a result of the process being in control, the anxiety of 'what could happen next' reduced dramatically, so less fear was in the environment. By working this way, we were actually developing experiential learning as different members across both groups started to co-create novel ideas which could be prototyped and tested in principle. This created a sense of moving forward. Interestingly, when people stated to see the tangible results of co-creating, a sense of confidence and trust started to emerge also at the individual level.

## 3: Maintaining Psychological Safety – by co-creating a controlled escalation process

It may seem counter-intuitive that an escalation process could maintain Psychological Safety, but it can, and it did. The reason this occurred was the escalation process was co-created by both groups. By now engineering dialogue had been established. No one wanted a repeat of the past nightmare and as the groups now were actually talking with each other, the co-created process was balanced in terms of effective solution finding rather than group positioning. It was well thought through, using their natural skills with objective and rational thought-based structures.

The above structure is informed by the principled used in Design Thinking, starting at the top and moving clockwise.



### Summary:

Sometimes I hear people say, 'Psychology is only theoretical'. As an engineer for more than 30 years, I have come to realise, many of the challenges I have faced in the past, were not in the domain of objectivity and rationality, that's where engineers do naturally well. The challenges were often in areas where 'we don't know, what we don't know' i.e. classical engineering blind-spots. In the West, we do not have a strong track record of teaching people about people, so no wonder we see problematic Group Dynamics (how people interact with each other).

### We want high-performing teams, do we?

Well, there is the need for the people in the team to better understand themselves and each other, to be able to do just that! The world of sports realised psychology is a key 'how to' for teams to achieve the high-performance edge. One day organisations will realise the same is true for them as well. All too often today, we see 'lip-service' via spending training budgets on popular trainings to get a tick in the box. We will not get high performance, if all we are doing is focusing on the metric of the tick in the box (See then comments on 'surrogation' later in this document).

The last question from this theme asks about Psychological Safety and how it may vary by sector or industry. As a basic mechanism, Psychological Safety is an aspect to consider wherever there are people working together. It could just be one person, or many. However, if we now say, does it matter to have Psychological Safety by sector or industry, it depends on your viewpoint. Morally, we may have one view. To answer this, let's think purely from a short-term efficiency perspective. For this (and I apologise for doing so) we will assume a human is a resource that can deliver specific tasks and we are not concerned about other characteristics such as well-being etc. So, the answer to the question is, it depends. If the task is rudimentary, i.e. putting a widget onto or into something and repeating time and time again. Then the need for psychosocial safety is less important as the task will be achieved by that person, or the person will be replaced. Think of the early manufacturing world, do the job or get out. This approach 'worked' (even though we may not like it) because there was always going to be someone else prepared to take over the job (supply was greater than the demand). In the knowledge space, Psychological Safety is critical. You typically can't just replace a person with another without substantial ramp time. In addition, when someone leaves, often important knowledge leaves with them. Depending on which report you review, the cost to the organisation could easily amount to half the persons salary in sunk costs.

My personal view is if you create a space that is Psychologically Safe, you now have the possibility of high-performance and or innovation from those in that space. It's also helpful to realise, without Psychological Safety, the efficiency and efficacy of learning is compromised. If you need a learning, innovation or an agile organisation, you need Psychological Safety, it's that simple at one level.

## Theme: Defensive or Productive Reasoning

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**Q:** Do you believe a single person with a strong character can create a Defensive-reasoning team?

**A:** Yes, as they would almost certainly trigger defensiveness in those around them. It takes knowledge, understanding and self-management skills, to be able to hold a position of Productive-Reasoning in such a situation.

**Q:** Does defensive reasoning organisations emerge from flat management structures, with multiple silo/groups, and only that conflicted management group with an alternate world view?

**A:** Defensive-Reasoning is more to do with how one or more individuals relate to the world (their worldview) and others (the relationships) around them. If you have a majority of people using Defensive-Reasoning (internally i.e. within themselves), it can be quite tough to hold a position of Productive-Reasoning based dialogue as already mentioned in the previous answer. I have a view about the structures organisation's use. It's not the structure itself that creates challenges assuming it can functionally work. How people use 'power' and 'relationships' within the structure is what seems to make the most difference (+ve or -ve).

**Q:** Due to Covid-19 driven recession many organisations need to lay people off. How will this environment impact the prevalence of defensive reasoning in those organisations? How can this effect be countered?

**A:** Probably yes, and to counter Defensive-Reasoning in this context, consider these items.

**A1:** Build the foundations for Psychological Safety using an objective, rational process

**A2:** Creating the sense of Psychological Safety using day to day experience, by letting people know the reality as best you are able to do so. Sharing that you don't know what comes next is helpful, because it demonstrates that you, and the management team care. There is much more to share here, but too much for this document.

**A3:** Maintaining Psychological Safety – by creating a sense of 'control'. You do this by encouraging dialogue (meaningful multiway discussions, and explorations while withholding judgment and remaining curious) and definitely NOT just broadcasting ONLY the organisational view (that's one part of a bigger picture).

**Q:** How important is the role of the leader of a team, especially where the organisation is not 'supportive' of productive reasoning? Can s/he 'override' the organisational culture?

**A:** Critical, and to some extent yes, they can create a 'bubble' to exist within with their team. But be aware the broader 'culture' will slowly etch itself into the bubbles surface. The big risk here is if there is a change of direction by the organisation, the very 'bubble' you create to enable your group to use Productive-Reasoning, can also impact the team's ability to spot that the direction change has occurred. Result can be the high-performing team can ultimately make itself no longer relevant to the organisation as their respective 'Purposes' drifted apart resulting in misalignment. As the team is disbanded, you can often hear the echo's in the wind '*but we were looking after the organisation's interests*'. This is tough place to be

## Theme: Culture

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**Q:** Are chaordic organizations covered in your organizational matrix?

**A:** Yes, a Chaordic organisation consciously acknowledges the co-existence of Chaos and Order (or Unordered and Ordered Systems concurrently in play). This awareness and supporting structures do not explicitly define the presence of Psychological Safety (+ve/-ve) or Environment Dynamic (+ve/-ve). But for a self-declared Chaordic organisation, the framework does provide a way of assessing how well it is doing. The principle reason for deploying a Chaordic based strategy would be to increase value creation while acknowledging complexity and order co-exists. If one is successful, then you would anticipate being in the upper right-hand side of the 2x2 framework in the presentation. The Six-Zones of Collaboration diagnostic (free report <https://bit.ly/3igi7zg>) might be of interest as this integrates several of these ideas with a focus on how individuals perceive the group they are a member of and the environment the group is working within i.e. it is agnostic of organisational structure.

**Q:** Have you come across poorly performing organisations that use this matrix in reverse, to get people out!

**A:** No, but I think I know what you mean. To introduce a frame of reference to help make sense of something. Then make the sense making framework the objective to achieve is flawed thinking (see later in this document the comments regarding the tyranny of meaningless metrics). At this point, most organisations create the very thing they are trying to protect against. Paradox's like this occur all the time. Many people do not spot them till it is too late and it has cost them, in some cases the whole business will pay by closing down. A great book that is close to this space is Crisis and Renewal by David Hurst.

**Q:** is it relevant to communities of practice?

**A:** Very much so, do people feel Psychologically Safe and speak up without fear of reprisal? If not, the community will be held back. In the presentation we used the term 'Organisational Environment'. This actually originates from the 'Environment Dynamic'. The Environment Dynamic does NOT assume traditional organisational boundaries, but groups of people coming together for any purpose, in any structure, including a community of practice. The Six-Zones of Collaboration diagnostic (free) might be of interest as this integrates several of these ideas <https://bit.ly/3igi7zg>. Groups Dynamics is core as it incorporates Psychological Safety and Environment Dynamic integrates Self-determination theory (SDT) which is applicable in traditional org structures and communities of practice. Daniel Pink made SDT accessible through his book DRIVE. If you are not familiar with it, I recommend you watch these two videos. RSA: <https://youtu.be/u6XAPnuFjJc> TED Talk: <https://youtu.be/rrkrvAUbU9Y>

**Q:** so how do you go about changing a company approach that is not supportive

**A:** You have to find a number of like-minded people, and ideally the team at the top of the organisation that manages Governance. Governance in the sense of ensuring purpose of the organisation is being honoured through the leadership team. Unfortunately, too many organisations see governance as a bureaucratic activity, rather than keeping true to the purpose while living the organisational values. Working and gaining sponsorship at this level can bring about the change. If this is not possible, then the best that can be achieved is creating small 'bubbles' of excellence.

## Theme: Ladder of Inference

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**Q:** How would you respond to the challenge "our lack of consensus could become irreversible" ?

**A:** This type of statement is crying out to be explored and NOT answered. There are likely to be some real GEMS to be discovered because when a one or more people make such a statement, it likely demonstrates they actually care deeply about the current situation. It feels more like a cry for help/survival. The challenge many of us have is we may not have the vocabulary to describe what we are sensing. This is not about training someone with new skills, it is about listening. Consider using the Design Thinking framework as a way of framing an interview with that person (or group). <https://designthinking.ideo.com/>. Caution: Design Thinking in the original form starts with 'Empathy'. I have come across one or two Design Thinking approaches that have replaced 'Empathy' with 'Needs Analysis'. If you see this, take care as it is very easy to fall into the trap of no longer empathising and taking a more holistic view on what is required. 'Needs Analysis' can become a functional specification that works at a rational level but could fail totally at the Social and Emotional level. If we are making/addressing something for humans to use, you need to consider Cognitive, Social and Emotional frames of reference.

**Q:** What is the difference between Kotter's 7 steps and the ladder of inference?

**A:** These are not looking at the same domain of interest.

Kotter is about a change check list or process: 1: Create Urgency, 2: Form a Powerful Coalition. 3: Create a Vision for Change. 4: Communicate the Vision. 5: Remove Obstacles. 6: Create Short-Term Wins. 7: Build on the Change. 8: Anchor the Changes in Corporate Culture.

The Ladder of inference is about how each of use process information, which informs (consciously and otherwise) our actions. They could be used together to better understand why the actions taken did not deliver the desired change.

The term 'Resistance to Change' is a classic you will hear, and Kotter speaks about how we need to get these 'resistant people' out of the way, I hold a different view which I will share shortly. Note, if you are using Kotter's



work, I strongly recommend you read this book: *The Heart of Change: Real-Life Stories of How People Change Their Organizations* by Kotter, John P, Cohen, Dan S (ISBN: 9781578512546).

His early work identified 7 things that typically went wrong in change initiatives, this then switched (10 years later) to the 7 things you need to do (the engineer in you knows these are NOT the same lens). Then sometime after his work more consciously discovered/included the human element which is better shared in the *Heart of Change* co-authored by Kotter.

Based on my own academic research in 2011, exploring 'Resistance to Change from a Leaders' Perspective'. After 100s of papers and many weeks of practitioner-based research, I came across one paper that seemed to capture the essence of what I had also experienced, and which aligned to the research findings. The front page has this statement '**Resistance to change is a natural, healthy phenomenon which needs to be taken seriously.**'

The title: *A Person-centred Approach to Dealing with Resistance to Change* by David Coghlan. If interested, you can download the paper from here <https://bit.ly/2NEtLWv>. My personal view is, if you sense resistance, that means people care, and they may also be potentially protecting the 'Crown jewels' of the organisation. My view is when you look for Resistance in a negative frame (as per Kotter and many others), you will find it and it will make things worse, yet another paradox I'm afraid we need to learn to master. How do you master it? Read the paper above.

## Theme: Group Dynamics

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**Q:** Can a high performing team be maintained, what are the key factors and what firms have done this well?

**A:** Watch the video at 7:30 minutes into the video, you can see what is needed bring about and maintain Psychological Safety <https://bit.ly/2Zq99XA> which is summarised next.

- Frame the work as a learning rather than an execution challenge... creating the rational for speaking up.
- Acknowledge your own fallibility... saying, I may miss something... what's your experience or view. This models that it is 'safe' to speak up.
- Model curiosity... asking many questions, being open to share your ideas and explore other's ideas.
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Take a Group Dynamic based diagnostic that integrates what's at play around the group as well as within. Free here <https://bit.ly/2ZizCWx>. You need BOTH the internal behaviours and relationships within a group to be functioning as well as a supportive environment. Both are explored in the diagnostic. If you want 8-Hrs of free eLearning on the topic, just go here <https://bit.ly/2VsORex>

## Theme: Misuse of Measurement

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**Q:** I have been abused most by companies with the most "investors in people points" (as they know the criteria and play the system). How do you prevent misleading figures being compiled?

**A:** Unfortunately, this phenomenon is common in many organisations (not restricted to "investors in people"). How to prevent first requires understanding what is the root-cause which is in the main, a function of poor application either due to ignorance of ill-informed efficacy. We often talk about the Tyranny of Meaningless Metrics. Strategy is being hijacked by numbers in way too many cases.

**WHY?** We have a tendency to mentally replace Strategy with Metrics. When we do so, this can destroy company value. This phenomenon is called Surrogation (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surrogation>), it's an issue that Edward Deming often spoke of (using different terms and means, just search on the internet for this term 'deming red bead white bead'), and unfortunately has found its way into the world of Culture and organisational wide surveys (the example in the question).

Surrogation is a common subconscious bias

- Where the objective or strategy is fairly abstract
- The metric of the objective or strategy is concrete and conspicuous
- The employee(s) accepts (at least subconsciously) the substitution of the Metric for the strategy/objective

The majority of people will 'game' the system, unless it is framed differently and ONLY if the organisation invests in training its staff, otherwise the majority will be fooled and play the game, unknowingly.

The Harvard audio goes into the HOW of the above in 22-min "Don't Let Metrics Undermine Your Business"

<https://hbr.org/2019/09/dont-let-metrics-undermine-your-business>

To conclude, I suspect the problem is not one of "How do you prevent misleading figures being compiled?", But more of "How to prevent inappropriate interpretation and resultant action as a result of the Metrics?"

Measurement is ONLY information. When organisation's link direct response behaviours to the measurement, the measurement will almost certainly be gamed!

## Theme: Multifaceted questions

**Q:** Does this {Defensive-Reasoning} also apply to open source organisations? especially with the difficulty of the narrow communication media. Does it create Cliques

**A:** Not sure we could say it creates Cliques, but for sure it would make them 'sticky' i.e. hard to change if one wanted to. These ideas and observations are applicable wherever we have people working with other people. Much of the work comes from Social Psychologists that informed and guided the thinking and development of **Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)** in Boston <https://www.mit.edu/> The names we tend to reference are Kurt Lewin, Edgar Schein, Chris Argyris and Donal Schon (Schön). Schon and Argyris published 'The Reflective Practitioner' which explores how professionals Think in Action. Their research was in principle about how professionals, Engineers, Architects etc worked together and worked out what was behind what they did. They did not research what they should do, they researched what they did do.

It's probably helpful to add the definition for Defensive-Reasoning for this question.

Some people use defensive and productive reasoning

Defensive reasoning

- (1) The objective is to protect and defend actor(s) (Actors here are people within the system)
- (2) The primary reasoning processes include making the premises explicit (on the assumption that they are valid) and testing them by the use of self-referential logic.
- (3) Transparency is avoided in the service of protecting the self and denying that one is protecting the self.
- (4) Self-deception is denied by cover-up. In order for the cover-up to work, it too must be covered up."

—Reasons and Rationalizations: The Limits to Organizational Knowledge by Chris Argyris

<https://amzn.eu/5D85SHJ>

**Q:** I have actually seen your comments on threat - people leaving or people staying - reflected in differing attitudes between those who are able to work from home and those who are turning up to work. Do you have any comments on the developing divide between two newly formed groups?

**A:** If people through a change in circumstances are changing group membership (leaving one group, to join another). There are some common blind spots.

First, the membership change as you describe it may not be voluntary and a result of changed circumstances, and maybe beyond anyone's control. Think of this as just setting the context. When it comes to how people relate to each other, there are three steps to the development of a relationship. 1: To be 'included' (what you want and what occurs) 2: To feel in 'control' (what you want and what occurs) 3: To be 'open' (what you want and what occurs). This relationship model was developed many years ago for the US Marine Corps. Unfortunately, we seem often to miss the need to explore the 'inclusion' step, so this means we jump to step 2 which is 'control'. Mostly when 'Control' is occurring and you have not been 'included', this will trigger Defensive-Reasoning (discussed earlier) or even conflict (maybe Passive-aggressive behaviours). If this has been triggered, the last thing you will likely see is 'openness'. So, now others feel people are holding things back. This whole drama plays out because we did not realise the importance of 'Including'. This is the first issue.

The second common issue is people are not always aware that change in group membership also carries LOSS. The loss of the prior relationships creates a form of grieving which will impact people in very different and unique ways. More often than not a sense of confusion can prevail, but we are often not sure why we have the feeling.

One high-level lens you can use to help navigate this complexity if you don't want to explore from a Psychological perspective is from the world of intelligences. We probably have heard of this trilogy before 'Conative', 'Social' and 'Emotional' development/sensing. Think of the three as follows 'Cognitive Processing Power', 'our Relationship with others' and 'our Relationship with ourselves'. As the group membership changes, keep in mind this trilogy. For some bizarre reason, the thing that makes teams work best (when you have the right skillset in the mix) is their Social intelligence, yet organisations have tended to focus on the Emotional intelligences (if they have been into people development at all). Recommended reading is **Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships** by Daniel Goleman <https://bit.ly/3dHatdx>

**Q:** If you believed that both the organisation and the team struggled, or perhaps the organisation is not enabling a high-performing team, what immediate actions would you take? Are there two or three key things that could be done to offer improvement?

**A:** YES,

- (1) Have the team watch the Amy Edmondson Video and create a safe place afterwards for the team to discuss and explore what each took from the video. You may benefit from an external facilitator (which we can advise if needed) or if you have facilitator skills internally, do so internally at first.
- (2) Have the team take this free diagnostic <https://bit.ly/31oeukF>, read the report, and discuss as a team. This one is about the group itself and the environment immediately around the group. APM (<https://www.apm.org.uk/>) sponsored research in 2014 identifies a positive correlation between these two perspectives.
- (3) Have the team take this free diagnostic <https://bit.ly/3ifwcuw>, read the report, and discuss as a team. ABC ([https://www.agilebusiness.org/page/Culture\\_Leadership](https://www.agilebusiness.org/page/Culture_Leadership)) sponsored research in 2018 identified 7 elements of an agile culture. This is what is explored in the diagnostic and relevant if you want to add an organisational cultural lens to knowing what to work on.

The above (Step 1) is all about developing Awareness. Step 2 is about developing the Skills to be able to exploit the groups new awareness. Then Step 3 is about implementing and securing /sustaining the behavioural change the group wants to make. Good facilitators will be able to help with Steps 2 and 3, but I suggest you have a look at Step 1 awareness to see if there is an appetite within the group to make a difference, then decide what to do next.

Golden Rule. You cannot change another person, the only person you can change is yourself. You can however, by designing different learning contexts, support others to become more aware. If this new awareness leads to a desired change by one or more members of the group, then you have a chance of bring about a change.

**Q:** In a project environment - is this solely a leadership/management issue or also impacted by the team? How do you change to becoming High Performing?

**A:** In my experience, it is Leadership/Management AND the Team(s) itself. See the three steps in the above answer as they are applicable here also. Plus, I would recommend the same steps be used with the Leadership/Management team as well. This creates a common language which aids understanding. If a change is wanted, then sponsorship from Leadership/Management is critical if the change is to become more widespread (assuming that was the desire).

**Q:** Thinking of Mission, Vision, Values, surely a cohesive organisation has a common set of Values that apply EQUALLY and EFFECTIVELY and ACCOUNTABLY to administration and staff or members? Member codes of conduct are surely a different, discrete and more intrusive strand?

**A:** What is interesting is at one level this statement is helping to separate the different dynamics in play, however the risk is that then these separate elements may inadvertently be looked at in isolation of each other. We have a tendency to choose an area to focus on (that is what many of us have been taught) and then by doing so, our investigation or change initiatives actually become siloed. In our experience, it is organisations and those within that realise any organisation has the following elements. Individuals (L1) with skills and knowledge, working within one or more groups (L2), one or more groups working with other groups(L3), and multiple groups making up the organisation (L4). If a large organisation the multiple groups may come together in multiple divisions (L5), and in all cases the organisation interacts with Society (L6) and its market (be this B2C or B2B) etc. The perspective that is typically missed is a tendency to choose the level of exploration, i.e. one of the perspectives detailed just now (L1 to L6). Then typically any insight is rarely integrated into the context that it is operating



within or directly influences. What does this mean? If you were working say at L2, you will ideally be paying attention to the direct influence of any work at L2 on L1 and L3.

**WHY?** Welcome to the world of unintended consequences. Have you ever seen a change initiative that may have created what was wanted, but there were some surprising side effects? Some may have been welcomed, and others not.

Note, the closer you are to L1 interventions (individual) the more the quality of the interpersonal relationships drive the outcomes. To get a better sense of what is being shared here, have a look at these two videos  
Quality of Relationships Video (<https://vimeo.com/337591915> 2-min)  
Quantity of Relationships Video (<https://vimeo.com/337515004> 2-min)

**Q:** What happens when there is lack of inclusion and engagement by your superiors in the group even when they are not aware that their actions are limiting team performance. How can you address this problem?

**A:** The following text was also used for an earlier question.

When it comes to how people relate to each other, there are three steps to the development of a relationship.

- 1: To be 'included' (what you want and what occurs)
- 2: To feel in 'control' (what you want and what occurs)
- 3: To be 'open' (what you want and what occurs).

Unfortunately, we seem often to miss the need to explore the 'inclusion' step (as is suggested by the question above), so this means we jump to step 2 which is 'control'. Mostly when 'Control' is occurring and you have not been 'included', this will trigger Defensive-Reasoning (discussed earlier) or even conflict (maybe Passive-aggressive behaviours). If this has been triggered, the last thing you will likely see is 'openness'. So, now others feel people are holding things back. This whole drama plays out because we did not realise the importance of 'Including'. This is the first issue.

The most effective way to address this is to have some of the supervisors engage in skills development. However, take care as our work for the past 10 years tends to focus on the blind spots across our education systems (Practitioner and Academic alike). So, if you go down the traditional training route, you may have people attend some skills training and still miss the points we have raised in this document.

I recommend having a member of the team complete the 8-hrs free eLearning course <https://getcollaborating.com/elearning>. If your organisation is really serious about making a difference in this space, then consider one or more internal members of staff becoming trained Facilitators. One of my roles is the subject matter expert (SME) for the following offering from APMG International <https://apmg-international.com/ACE> which is overseen by UKAS (<https://ukas.com>)

**Q:** Why do you think it's less likely that people are forced to work collaboratively but do not necessarily trust each other rather than trust coming first before the want for collaboration?

**A:** This is a great question to close on for this Q&A document. In the majority of cases, people have not been encouraged, supported or educated to better understand three core perspectives. Themselves (P1), others (P2), or the space between themselves and other people i.e. the relationship(P3). Having spent more than 10-years as a Psychometrician and Coach, it became clear to me the level of understanding an individual typically has of these three perspectives, self(P1), other(P2) and relationship(P3) is normally quite limited.

On top of this limited understanding (or indeed a complete blind spot for some), the next challenge is we reinforce throughout the majority of our education activities (academic and practitioner) the importance of individual achievement (the focus is on 'I', rather than 'WE'). By focussing on 'I' P1, it becomes all too easy to miss the importance of P2 and P3. It has already been highlighted that we have Cognitive, Emotional and Social Intelligences and that often Social intelligence is not explicitly considered. One can loosely map the following Cognitive, Emotional intelligence is exploring P1 and some of P2. Social Intelligence is exploring strongly P2 and P3.

So how does this relate to TRUST? Well trust is a feeling/emotion, and for those than can recall this old saying 'leave your emotions at home' we have inadvertently created a paradox. The most powerful emotion an organisation, groups, supervisor or individual can solicit in another over time, is trust. And we in the past have asked people to 'leave it at home'. A few years ago, I shared this view with a CEO of a large organisation, and they

did not see any problem, asking people to leave their emotions at home. Saying, we don't need trust, we just need them to work as per contract. This view is a function of this person's worldview.

Here are a few resources that could help explore this situation.

- Different worldviews in leadership <https://hbr.org/2005/04/seven-transformations-of-leadership>
- Research involving 24K people is shared in this book 'Tribal Leadership: Leveraging Natural Groups to Build a Thriving Organization' <https://bit.ly/31tzrKP>
- Free resources to focus on Trust within Teams and Groups <http://www.teamtrustsurvey.com/>

Now to answer the question explicitly.

Part I: Why do you think it's less likely that people are forced to work collaboratively but do not necessarily trust each other?

There seems to be an innate understanding that people working together (collaborating) is a good thing, 'work more collaboratively is what is needed here, so please just get on with it'.

Unfortunately, most people are not sure how to create a collaborative environment in the first place, plus there is poor understanding of what collaboration really is and requires at the interpersonal and intrapersonal levels. It actually requires and appreciation of Group Dynamics and benefits from Systems Thinking insights as well. Then, the situation is further confounded by the failure to realise TRUST can be an amplifier of attenuator of Collaboration, and in addition rarely spoken of in an open and honest manner (recall Ladder of Inference and Psychological Safety for a moment) .

Part II: ... rather than trust coming first before the want for collaboration?

I fully agree with the desire to start with TRUST, however, here lies another challenge. If we consider the lens of Personality Traits (NOT to be confused with Personality Type which is what MBTI explores).

Personality Trait research has a gold standard in the world of research. This is the same gold standard used to validate the exploration of Personality Neuroscience. It is often referred to as the Five Factor Model (specifically NEO-RPI developed over many years by Paul T. Costa, Jr. and Robert R. McCrae). The full five-factor model has five aspects 'OCEAN'. Each Aspect has 6 facets that explore specific behaviours (5 x 6 = 30 facets explored in total). The 'A' of 'OCEAN' stands for **Agreeableness, and one of the 6 facets of Agreeableness is TRUST. Be careful, NOT all Five Factor models are equal!**

If we now consider the Trust measurement, here is the description of this scale

Trust and how to interpret the scores.

High scores (>1 Standard deviation above the midpoint = 16% of the norm group population):

These people tend to describe themselves as being very accepting of others and tend to take people as they find them, trusting of what other people say and do, preferring to look for the best in others, giving them the benefit of the doubt.

Average scores (+/-1 Standard Deviation around the midpoint = 68% of the norm group population):

These people tend to assume people are trustworthy and sincere. They are probably alert and spot any real grounds for suspicion but on the whole, would seem happy to take people as they find them.

Low scores (<1 Standard Deviation below the midpoint = 16% of the norm group population):

These people tend to have a natural inclination to assume that there are usually hidden motives behind what other people say and do. This suggests they tend to read between the lines rather than accepting things at face value.

This is where the problem starts for Collaboration. Depending what range of Personality Traits (Low, Average and High Scores for TRUST) one has in the group, this will influence the natural tendency (at that moment in time) and level of TRUST that may exist in each relationship. Note each relationship has two parties, so two Trust facet scores. Now recall the number and quality of relationships (discussed in prior answers).

Suddenly the situation is getting more complex. The next classic step is to identify who to select for the group based on the Personality Trait TRUST results. This is the time for the next challenge, already discussed and captured in 'Surrogation is a common subconscious bias'.

In our own exploration of this complexity, we concluded selecting in or out, based on Personality Trait alone is flawed due to a number of complexities that emerge. We ended up taking a position that you have who you have in any working group or team. The place to start is actually develop the group or teams' skills in terms of understand the core elements in play within Group Dynamics. Do so, in a Psychologically Safe way, but also do NOT overwhelm. All the group members probably want to do is work together in a more collaborative manner. It was for this reason we ultimately explored gamification as a rapid form of skill development in the group dynamic space.



<https://vimeo.com/231456103>

Interview by LearningNowTV, exploring how gamification can aid collaboration in the workplace  
If you have any questions relating to this Q&A, feel free to contact me directly.



[Rod.Willis@ietvolunteer.org](mailto:Rod.Willis@ietvolunteer.org)